

Murray History Advisory Board
Minutes for February 23, 2010

Attendance: Susan Wright, David Adams, Kathy Romero, Steve Meyers, Jay Bollwinkle, Tim Tingey (community and economic development director), Mary Ann Kirk, (staff).

1. Minutes for January 26, 2010 were approved as written.
2. Tim Tingey briefly reviewed the progress of the downtown master plan. The city did a Dan Jones survey that indicated its residents want to see something happen with our downtown. His department wants to facilitate a process and plan that would help the area meet its potential. They are creating a new ordinance that would encourage redevelopment of a downtown that is more destination oriented. This ordinance would dissolve the current DHOD ordinance but keep some of its positive points and incorporate it into a new Murray City Center zoning district with no underlying zones. It will define its own land use, design standards, sustainability and historic preservation. The focus will be on economic development but still contain some historic preservation elements within it.

Steve asked how this connects with the Life on State Street project. Tim said he is on that committee and Murray's vision is the same and actually is ahead of that project.

Tim shared the boundary of this newly proposed district which is nearly the same as the DHOD. The ordinance would designate significant historic buildings that would be protected. All other buildings would be eliminated from this specific zoning review process. His department, with some input from Mary Ann, has reviewed the significant buildings and proposed removing a few of the buildings that were previously designated as significant including the Hoffman Building, the fire station, City Hall, and the Jones Court duplexes.

Mary Ann noted that the Hoffman building actually retains much of its historic integrity although it has the very simple architectural elements of the 1920s. Tim felt the building is a mess and has been gutted. Board members didn't feel it had enough architectural significance to warrant protection. Although interior preservation is not part of the DHOD protection, Mary Ann noted that a wood crafted sunburst was still intact last year on the second floor. State historic architects said they had never seen one still intact and this should be preserved.

Tim felt the fire station has also lost its integrity. Jay asked if a structural engineer has looked at it. Mary Ann said the state historic architects felt many of the changes could be reversed. Kathy felt there was enough integrity and historic significance that this should be protected. Board members agreed. Tim was worried that the location could discourage development on this property. Board members thought it could be incorporated as part of a larger development. Mary Ann said the second floor was still in its original condition when she toured it several years ago.

City Hall has been significantly altered on the front. It is a C on the RLS survey but was included as significant in the DHOD because of its historical significance. Mary Ann noted the Arlington School was built in 1939 and does retain its art deco architecture to the rear. Board members didn't think it warranted protection.

Mary Ann felt the Jones Court duplexes have some of the most unique historic architecture in Murray. Kathy agreed. David felt they are an eyesore. Mary Ann said that sometimes you have to consider what it would be like if someone took care of it. There is a market for people who are interested in restoring a building. This block is probably the most preserved. It would be nice if we could save one of the duplexes. It could be used as a small business or a component of a larger development. Tim explained the new ordinance won't allow a stand alone residential unit. Board members said they would drive by and look at this before making a formal recommendation for this building.

Steve didn't want a situation like Cottonwood Mall where they level buildings and then do nothing with it. Susan said the Grecian Gardens is a good example of this. Mary Ann said Bonnyview School is another example.

Steve was surprised that there were few differences between the significant buildings in the DHOD compared to this new proposal. Mary Ann said these significant buildings were carefully reviewed for the DHOD and several have been recently restored. Steve asked what the City is doing about the Murray Mercantile and the Harker building. He felt this was a key area. Tim said these buildings would be preserved as significant buildings in the proposed plan but the city itself does not have funds to do anything with them at this point. Mary Ann and Susan acknowledged that once the slip cover siding on the Murray Mercantile is removed, the original architecture will be exposed. Steve also asked if Day Murray Music had been changed a lot. Mary Ann said that this building did retain much of its architectural elements on the second floor and has major historic significance. They worked closely with state historic preservation office when they restored this building a few years ago. Steve asked if there are any buildings that are not shown on the map that should be protected. Mary Ann said the only concern she has are the residential homes along Center Street. If we allow large developments on the west side of the street, it could encroach on and eventually erode the historic residential district to the east. Tim said they are trying to address this in the ordinance.

Tim explained that the proposed master plan does show an open space near the Cahoon Mansion where a few other historic buildings could be relocated such as the Townsend home. The city would focus first on an area between Poplar and State Street between Vine and 4800 South. If enough growth occurs, UTA would consider putting a Trax stop at the west end of this district. Tim said that a number of groups have expressed interest in this area for corporate headquarters but they want the city to invest in the area first. Mary Ann said that a performing arts center would be a good first step. Kathy asked if the city would approach national chains. Tim said there would be some of that. But much would be small businesses. Kathy said it would be nice to have some small but

upscale and unique shops that create character. Tim said it could have a mix of retail, financial and professional offices, locally owned businesses, national chains and civic buildings as a destination place. We just need one or two investments to get this started. He explained the master plan process will start to roll out in the spring with public input and hopefully have the ordinance completed by mid summer. They are anxious for public input. He reminded everyone that the proposed map is still a draft and things could change.

Board members seemed to agree on the Hoffman building and Arlington School/City Hall as ones that can be removed from the significant list but retain the fire station as significant and look at the Jones Court duplexes for additional discussion. Board members will provide a formal written recommendation next month for these four buildings.

David said that he is impressed with the level of preservation in Europe. He realizes that people don't like government intrusion. But when we are trying to do something like this, we need city ordinances to require preservation of historic buildings. He felt we have the attitude to build a building with a 40 year life and then build another building. Mary Ann noted that has been the attitude with buildings like the Hoffman building or Bonnyview School even when it could be shown it was cheaper to rehab and seismically strengthen the building. Mary Ann noted we plan to talk about protecting landmarks again in the near future.